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From: Andrew L. Mayer [mailto:amayerstl@sbcglobal.net]

Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2004 8:07 AM

To: Michael Copps; Jonathan Adelstein; Kevin Martin; Michael Powell; Kathleen Abernathy

Subject: Video Relay Services

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Dear Esteemed FCC Commissioners,

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

I am writing to you to support the Video Relay Services (VRS) by not cutting back the rates.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing people are visually oriented in their communications . . . they use their vision to see the sign language and to read lips. Many have low English skills that drastically hinder their efforts to use text-based relay services such as TTYs.

The Video Relay Services provides real-time visual communications between VRS users and VRS interpreters in talking to the party being called.

For years, science-fiction television and movie stories show video communications, particularly the "Star Trek" series

TV and movies usually are the forerunner of possible technologies to come in today's world.

At last, video relay services are available and it is a REAL treat to have the freedom of unhindered communications, calling to order pizza, to make an appointment, to buy something and to reach out to family and friends. This is truly heaven for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population.

With the number of VRS minutes increasing every month and thousands of users reaping the benefits of this wonderful service, the FCC wants to cut the rate by 55%.

This cut causes video relay services to reduce video interpreters and technical staff thus resulting in shorter access hours and longer waits for online service.

An analogy is chaining a puppy in a fenced yard that had been built for him to roam around. Now he can't go beyond six feet and has to wait for his walk, if at all.

Please do not allow this rate cut. You are the gatekeeper on access to this liberating video relay services which is truly the promised land for many users who had dreamt that they would be on the same equal basis as others in the larger world telecommunications-wise. Do not push them back into the dark ages again.

I would be glad to come to your office to give testimony on how VRS has become an integral part in the lives of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people for my wife, my two children and I are deaf.

Again, please continue to support Video Relay Services and oppose any rate cuts.

It is hoped that this e-mail will not trigger a standard auto-response with the usual blather that there's too many e-mails to respond to and that each e-mail is read and is important. A personal reply with a commitment to action on this VRS matter would be very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew L. Mayer

St Louis, MO

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